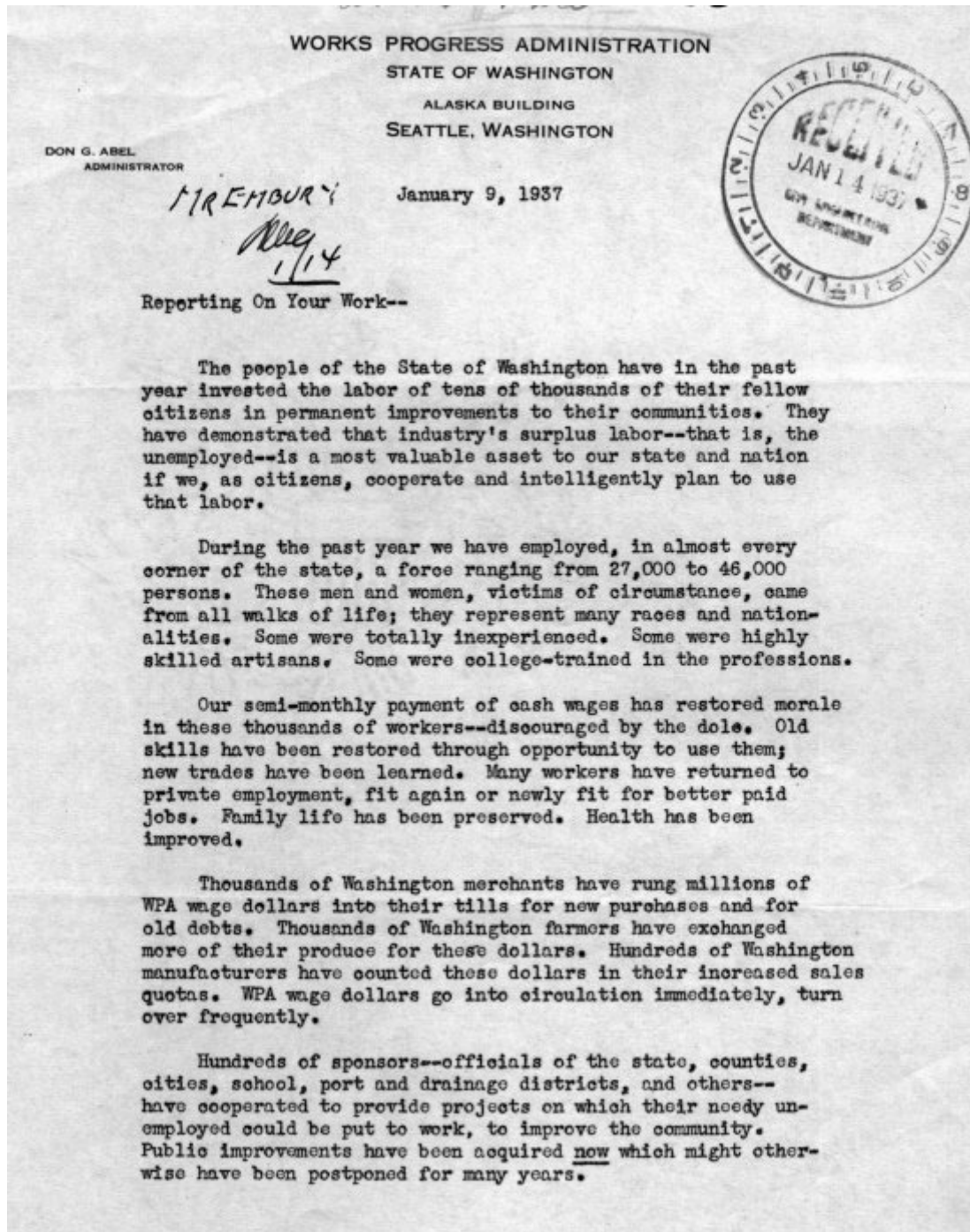


Citation: Don G. Abel letter, January 9, 1937. "WPA," Box 36, Folder 11. Department of Engineering Unrecorded Subject Files, 2602-02, Seattle Municipal Archives.

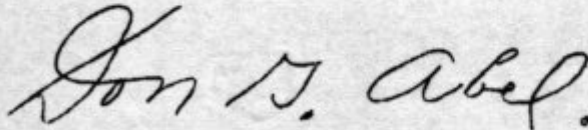


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The usefulness of your Works Progress Administration program is determined by the intelligence and interest shown by us, the people of the State of Washington, every one of us. Unemployment is our problem. Our aim should be to put every available federal dollar directly into wages. This can be done if communities will plan projects useful to them and provide the necessary equipment and materials.

Working together, we have accomplished much with our surplus labor in 1936. I feel that much more can be accomplished in the year 1937, and I assure you of the heartiest cooperation on the part of the Works Progress Administration in seeing that each project is worthwhile and efficiently operated. May I, as State Administrator of your Works Progress Administration, have your continued cooperation in even greater accomplishments in 1937?

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don G. Abel." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Don G. Abel
State Administrator
Works Progress Administration

A REPORT ON COMMUNITY PROGRESS

By Don G. Abel, State Administrator
Works Progress Administration
Alaska Building Seattle, Washington

What have the people of Washington accomplished in the past year for their communities in planning useful work on which to employ the state's surplus labor force?

The complete record of achievement, in cooperation with the Works Progress Administration, is too great in scope to be condensed into convenient summary. However, the paragraphs which follow indicate a few of the things accomplished by this force of WPA workers--which has ranged in number from 46,000 to 27,000 persons. Only sample projects have been listed, to show variety of work and geographical distribution.

SPOKANE converted Felts Field into one of the West's finest airports; vastly extended and improved its sewer system; built new recreational facilities; relocated and improved many miles of the historic Palouse highway; reconditioned thousands of school desks.

POMEROY built a thoroughly modern brick addition to its high school. CHENEY is completing a sewage disposal system. COLVILLE improved State Game Park. REPUBLIC graded and gravelled its streets. DAVENPORT built a golf course. SPRAGUE improved its water system. RITZVILLE installed ornamental lights. ASOTIN installed water mains. CLARKSTON built a bath house. DAYTON refinished county courthouse interior.

PASCO laid sidewalks and watermains, built tennis courts, moved irrigation pipe. WALLA WALLA built a natural amphitheatre for the Whitman Centennial; curbed Mill Creek's dangerous flood waters. WHITE BLUFFS built a recreation hall. So did WALNUT GROVE. PROSSER cleared irrigation canals; ripped the walls. KENNEWICK improved irrigation districts. WATERVILLE improved rural roads.

CHELAN improved Lakeshore Park. CASHMERE built a concrete garage and warehouse. LEAVENWORTH hewed a 1,000,000-gallon water reservoir in solid rock. WENATCHEE dug water mains down below the frost line; built a fine swimming pool; converted into a modern airport the field where Pangborn and Horndon landed after the first trans-Pacific flight.

GLE ELUM improved its airport; installed sewers. ROSLYN razed four obsolete school buildings, salvaged the material. ELLENSBURG improved Memorial Park. KITTITAS COUNTY installed fish screens in irrigation ditches.

YAKIMA built a concrete sewage disposal plant, to stop river pollution; improved track at State Fair Grounds; built reservoir to double city's water storage capacity.

COWICHEE remodeled school gymnasium. GRANDVIEW added ornamental street lights. GRANGER tore down an old school building, built a new one. SELAH replaced wood stave water mains. SUNNYSIDE constructed irrigation pipe lines; erected a playfield grandstand. TOPPENISH landscaped a cemetery; built bridges. WAPATO'S children now swim in a new concrete swimming pool, no longer in dangerous irrigation ditches. WHITE SWAN improved school playgrounds. ZILLAH built a new school gymnasium. GOLDENDALE completed a bandstand. BINGEN painted a school.

SKAMANIA COUNTY opened new spawning grounds by building fish ladders. CAMAS installed water mains; graded streets. LACENTER installed a water system; graded an athletic field. RIDGEFIELD developed a recreational park. PROEBSTL improved drainage. YACOLT repaired water reservoir dam. WASHOUGAL dug boulders to level a playfield; constructed a playshed.

VANCOUVER improved several recreational fields; installed sewers; graded streets; landscaped a cemetery; reconstructed flood destroyed roads.

COWLITZ COUNTY used many dredges, steam shovels, barges, to raise, strengthen and riprap dikes on many miles of riverfront near Longview, Kelso, Castle Rock and Woodland, where floods raised havoc in 1933. CASTLE ROCK overhauled the high school. KALAMA demolished ancient court house, salvaged materials. SILVER LAKE restored fire-destroyed school gymnasium. WOODLAND built storm sewers. KELSO built a swimming pool, grandstand and athletic field; improved its airport. LONGVIEW landscaped its extensive park area; built a grandstand; improved its streets.

CATHLAMET renovated the courthouse. DEEP RIVER extended its roads. SKAMOKAWA rebuilt old fair buildings. ILWACO cleared a playfield. LONG BEACH improved buildings and grounds at the State College Experimental Station. OCEAN PARK built a school. RAYMOND completed a water reservoir and drove a 1,200-foot tunnel for water mains. SOUTH BEND improved its sewers.

ALPHA improved its school. So did ADNA. DOTY shingled school building roofs, painted exteriors, repaired. DRYAD and FORD'S PRAIRIE both fixed up their schools. MORTON laid concrete sidewalks; built fish ladders. MOSSY ROCK built a brick school bus-garage. NAPAVALINE replaced wooden sidewalks with concrete. PE ELL built a swimming pool. RANDLE, VADER and TOLEDO all improved their school grounds. WINLOCK completed a sewer project.

CHEHALIS improved its streets, dug drainage ditches, constructed tennis courts. CENTRALIA now boasts of Borst Park with race track, stables and grandstand for its Pioneer Days celebration; also a new golf course.

ABERDEEN built a fish hatchery; snagged streams; dug drainage ditches; improved its parks and streets; constructed tennis courts and community house. HOQUIAM graded and drained school grounds.

MONTESANO straightened stream channels to avert floods; reconstructed county garage; installed sprinkler system at park. ELMA improved its schools. OCCOSTA built teacher's cottages, auditorium for school. PACIFIC BEACH and SATSOP improved schools. WESTPORT worked on its 45-acre recreational park.

BELFAIR built an unusually handsome chalet-type school of logs and hand-split shakes. HOODSPORT built a school gymnasium. SHELTON removed flood hazards by snagging Goldsborough Creek. MASON COUNTY improved its roads.

BUCKLEY landscaped cemetery; drained lands; built bleacher seats at high school. EATONVILLE rebuilt grandstand. FOX ISLAND built baseball field and tennis courts. GIG HARBOR improved school and grounds. Likewise JOVITA. And KAPOWSIN. LAGRANDED expanded experimental nursery area in Charles Lathrop Park forest. MILTON laid miles of macadamized sidewalk. ORTING drained a lake at Old Soldiers' Home, cleared land. PUYALLUP improved several school grounds; graded streets.

ROY installed playfield equipment. SPANAWAY improved the park. STEILACOOM improved the state game farm; laid watermains. VAUGHN improved its school grounds. As did WAUNA and WILKESON.

TACOMA restored historic Ft. Nisqually; repaired Belt street car line tracks; improved many school grounds; dug many sewers and drainage ditches; provided picnic facilities at Wapato Park; created Jefferson Park from the wilderness.

BELLINGHAM constructed a municipal dock bulkhead; built a fish hatchery; improved State Normal School campus; improved streets and parks. WHATCOM COUNTY improved many miles of road.

BLAINE dredged to improve small boat harbor; built sidewalks. EVERSON cleared community park. FERNDAL laid new sewer pipe. HARMONY, KENDALL and MAPLE FALLS improved school buildings. FRIDAY HARBOR constructed a new library and city hall building.

ANACORTES improved streets. BURLINGTON diked along the Skagit River. BIG LAKE built a new school. HAMILTON erected a water tower. LACONNER put a kitchen in the community park. MT. VERNON diked the river, did extensive drainage ditch work. ROCKPORT repaired school buildings. SEDRO-WOOLLEY built revetments along the river; handball courts and running track at high school.

ARLINGTON extended its sewers; beautified the cemetery; repaired streets. EDMONDS built a fine recreational field with grandstand, track, tennis courts. GRANITE FALLS improved school buildings and grounds; replaced watermains. INDEX replaced wooden sidewalks. LAKE STEVENS improved school buildings and grounds. As did MONROE, on four different schools. And MARYSVILLE. And MUKILTEO. SNOHOMISH added a music room to one school, reconditioned buildings, furniture and grounds of others. STANWOOD built one of the finest city-community halls in the state. SULTAN reclaimed unused water pipe. SNOHOMISH COUNTY carried out flood control works on several rivers.

EVERETT replaced 28-inch watermains; developed a ten-acre athletic playfield; built a golf course with auxiliary baseball diamond, tennis courts; repaired the armory; extensively improved Forest Park.

NEAH BAY, farthest Northwest village in the United States, improved roads. SEQUIM built a library and recreational center; extended sewers. PORT ANGELES improved parks; built an airport; repaired water system; widened streets. QUILCENE improved fish hatchery. PORT TOWNSEND built a modern athletic field.

ALGONA protected thoroughfares against flood damage. AUBURN built a game farm. BELLEVUE altered and repaired schools; improved bathing beaches. BOTHELL added tennis courts; improved streets. BURIED dug drainage ditches. ENUMCLAW removed flood-making stream obstructions. FOSTER, TUKWILA and THORNDIKE repaired schools. DUVALL added to gymnasium. North of HALLER LAKE, on outskirts of Seattle, a new water system, with miles of pipe and a steel water tower was completed. ISSAQUAH built a state fish hatchery. KENT repaired and improved many schools in or near the city. KIRKLAND built a food-processing plant for the county; added school rooms; repaired streets. PRESTON painted and repaired schools. REDMOND replaced watermains, built fire trails. RENTON built river bulkheads; improved nearby roads. RICHMOND BEACH and SNOQUALMIE added tennis courts. VASHON ISLAND graded roads. WOODINVILLE built one of the finest small-town brick schools in the United States.

SEATTLE built or improved a large number of playfields and school grounds; developed an 18-hole golf course from wild hillside land; carried out needed work on its parks; developed an arboretum; landscaped Green Lake shores and dredged the lake bottom to make the water swimmable; graded 18 miles of badly needed streets in the White Center district; built fish-rearing ponds; did lots of work on Boeing Field; carried out numerous slide control projects; laid watermains and sewers; repaired schools and grounds; landscaped the University Campus; operated extensive vegetable gardens.

Was that all? No, scores of communities employed their women in sewing rooms to produce tens of thousands of garments for the needy; household articles; public hospital supplies; layettes. Other women served hot lunches to thousands of school children; served as housekeeping aides in temporarily distressed homes; as readers for blind persons; as nurses; as library assistants and repairers of books.

Many communities put their idle "white collar" workers at codifying city ordinances; at chemical research; at mineral survey; at studies in juvenile delinquency; at surveys of traffic, sanitary facilities, land use, farm mortgage conditions, timber, farm labor; at modernizing county assessor's tax records, and other county records. Other workers brought to light valuable information in surveys of federal archives, of historical buildings, of historical records.

Some professional workers painted murals for public buildings; prepared models for museums; prepared informational and historical guides and maps; restored the living theatre to communities; provided music in public parks and for under-privileged groups.

Hundreds of teachers brought adult education in scores of subjects to thousands of persons in voluntary classes, both in the classroom and by correspondence. Classes in history, economics, Americanization, literacy, the arts and sciences, and many others. Many communities utilized their unemployed to organize and supervise recreational groups in handicraft, in pageantry, in health-building games, in life-saving, finding in that group play an increased safety for the child, a lessened juvenile delinquency.

From every corner of the state comes testimony, "Surplus labor is an asset to those communities who utilize it intelligently."